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Contact: Amanda Price
(517) 373-1855

Sikkema appoints Birkholz to Great Lakes Commission

*Senator Birkholz's environmental expertise
will serve the Great Lakes Commission*

Tuesday, April 8, 2003- Senator Patricia Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township, has been appointed to the Great Lakes Commission by Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema.

"As a Senator that represents the lakeshore and as chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee, Senator Birkholz offers the commission a unique perspective on Great Lakes issues," said Senate Majority Leader Sikkema. "Senator Birkholz's expertise and understanding of environmental issues will be a great asset to the commission."

"We are delighted to welcome Senator Birkholz to our Michigan Delegation; her leadership, enthusiasm and commitment to the Great Lakes will be a tremendous asset," stated Dr. Michael J. Donahue, Commission President/CEO. "The member states and provinces of the Great Lakes Commission are dedicated to the informed use, management and protection of the greatest system of freshwater on the face of the earth."

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Senator Birkholz said, "The Great Lakes are the key component of Michigan's environment. I look forward to working with the members of the GLC to ensure that Michigan's resources are protected, that our citizens are educated and that our state moves forward."

The Great Lakes Commission is composed of 3-5 members from each state or province in the Great Lakes basin. Its purpose is to help establish a comprehensive plan for protecting the water resources of the Great Lakes.

The Commission's mission is to promote an effective plan to protect and use the water resources of the basin, to plan for the welfare of the lakes in light of special concern for the health of the lakes, to make it possible for the people in the basin to derive the maximum benefit from the utilization of navigational aids and to ensure a good balance of the legitimate uses of the water resources of the basin.

In Michigan, state law provides that there shall be 5 members. The Governor and the Attorney General are members of the commission, with the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader each having an appointment to the GLC. The Governor appoints the fifth member from Michigan.

Since its establishment 47 years ago, the Great Lakes Commission has been a pioneer in applying principles of sustainability to the development, use and conservation of the national resources of the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River.

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28TH SENATE DISTRICT

State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913 | PH (517) 373.0797 | FAX (517) 373.5236 | www.sikkema.org